

STATEMENT OF J. STEVEN GRILES, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MONETARY POLICY, TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES, CONCERNING H.R. 1914, TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A COIN TO COMMEMORATE THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JAMESTOWN SETTLEMENT.

March 10, 2004

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 1914, a bill to provide for the issuance of a coin to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown Settlement. The Department strongly supports the enactment of this bill.

In 2007, the people of the United States and many of our friends from around the world will come together to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement in America- the 1607 settlement at Jamestown in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

More than just our nation's birthplace, Jamestown is the point of origin on this continent for many of the principles and precepts that have distinguished America, including our representative government where the oldest legislative body in the New World first convened at Jamestown in 1619. President Teddy Roosevelt declared, during the 300th anniversary commemoration in 1907, that the Jamestown founding "marks the beginning of the history of the United States."

Jamestown represented free enterprise—the Jamestown colony was a private venture, the first stock investment in America. Jamestown represented cultural diversity—it was the site where Europeans, Africans, and Virginia Indians first came together, foreshadowing America’s unique character as a nation of diverse groups. In addition, the rule of law, and our English language and many traditions and freedoms can all trace their origins to Jamestown.

The Jamestown anniversary commemoration in 2007 will provide Americans with a unique opportunity to recall how our nation began, and to reflect on our continuing opportunity and obligation to make the promise of freedom real for all Americans and for peoples around the globe. The march of freedom and democracy around the world today traces its roots to America, and America traces its roots to Jamestown.

Although I am testifying here today on behalf of the Department of the Interior, I also am pleased to serve as one of sixteen members appointed by Secretary Norton to the congressionally-authorized Jamestown 400th Commemoration Commission. As you may know, Virginia is my home – I was born in Halifax County, Virginia, graduated from the University of Richmond, and served the Commonwealth for 10 years in the Virginia Department of Conservation and Economic Development. We Virginians are proud of Jamestown and have made great efforts to ensure that the stories of Jamestown are preserved for future generations.

The Jamestown 400th Commemoration Commission, the Department of the Interior, the Commonwealth of Virginia’s State and local planning groups, and outstanding private

partners such as the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities - Preservation Virginia are taking the opportunity to share this historical treasure by planning a richly diverse and inclusive, national and international commemoration. These groups have worked closely together to develop signature events and programs for the 400th commemoration that are wide-ranging, interesting, and informative with the goal of reaching millions of visitors across the country and around the world. This commemorative coin is a key component of this effort.

H.R. 1914 would require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue two types of commemorative coins—a \$5 gold coin and a \$1 silver coin. The minting of a commemorative coin to honor Jamestown at this great milestone is both fitting and proper. It will enable the Federal, State, local and private partners to leave a lasting legacy at Historic Jamestowne and Jamestown Settlement. The proceeds from the coin will contribute to the further development of state-of-the-art educational and interpretive facilities at the Jamestown sites.

Visitors, young and old, will enjoy a varied cultural experience associated with the commemoration. They will see 17th century artifacts unearthed daily at the active archaeological dig on the site of the original fort, bridging the past and the present. In addition, they will experience living history at the recreated James Fort, a Powhatan Indian village, and on replicas of the three ships that crossed the ocean in 1606 and 1607. They will also witness the abundant wildlife and natural beauty of Jamestown Island,

while enjoying a new visitor center, and learning at the new, interactive museum and educational facilities.

This commemorative coin will also assist the work done by the National Park Service at Colonial National Historical Park situated at Jamestown, Yorktown and Williamsburg – the very cradle of American liberty. It will help the park remain as a beacon for all Americans who cherish their freedom and seek to discover more about its origins and living legacies.

Mr. Chairman, we appreciate this opportunity to share these exciting plans with you and the Committee. We are especially grateful for the active support and involvement of Representative Davis as well as other members of the Virginia delegation, and the many members from all across the country who have lent their names to this important legislation.

This concludes my prepared remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members might have.